

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listing of claims in the application.

1-38. (Cancelled).

39. (Currently Amended) An immunogenic composition comprising a an isolated protease maturation protein of *S. pneumoniae*, wherein the protein has an amino acid sequence ~~in accordance with~~ as set forth in SEQ ID NO: 2, and/or a homologous ~~and/or a functionally~~ homologous protein thereof, wherein the protein or homologous protein has opsonophagocytic activity, and wherein the composition raises an immune response to ~~streptococcal infections~~ *Streptococcus pneumoniae*.

40. (Cancelled).

41. (Previously Presented) The immunogenic composition according to claim 39, further comprising a suitable adjuvant or carrier.

42. (Previously Presented) The immunogenic composition according to claim 39, wherein the protein is the protease maturation protein from *S. pneumoniae* Ft231 or EF3296.

43. (Previously Presented) The immunogenic composition according to claim 39, wherein the protein is a purified, recombinant or synthetic protein.

44. (Currently Amended) A method for preparing ~~of~~ an immunogenic composition against *S. pneumoniae* comprising the steps of:

a. isolating a protease maturation protein of *S. pneumoniae*, wherein the protein has an amino acid sequence ~~in accordance with~~ as set forth in SEQ. ID. NO: 2, ~~or a recombinant or~~

~~synthetic protein thereof~~ and/or a homologous or functionally homologous protein thereof,
wherein the protein or homologous protein has opsonophagocytic activity; and

- b. combining the protein obtained under (a) with a suitable carrier or adjuvant.

45. (Cancelled).

46. (Currently Amended) A method for ~~raising~~ raising an immune response in a mammal against ~~an infection of~~ *S. pneumoniae* comprising administering a suitable dose of an immunogenic composition according to claim 39.

47. (Currently Amended) A recombinant protease maturation protein of *S. pneumoniae* comprising an amino acid sequence ~~in accordance with~~ as set forth in SEQ. ID. NO: 2, and/or a homologous ~~and/or a functionally homologous~~ protein thereof, wherein the protein or homologous protein has opsonophagocytic activity.

48. (New) A carrier for an immunogen in a vaccine, wherein said carrier comprises an isolated protease maturation protein of *S. pneumoniae*, wherein the protein has an amino acid sequence as set forth in SEQ. ID. NO: 2, and/or a homologous protein thereof, wherein the protein or homologous protein has opsonophagocytic activity.